

REF: HUMBLE REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR COMPLETION OF ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC OUTSTATION CHURCH IN OBOSAI, SOROTI CATHOLIC DIOCESE, UGANDA.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH (by Mr. Joseph Aonu Okiror)

St. Mary's Catholic Chapel Obosai is located in Soroti Catholic Diocese, 395 miles from Kampala in the North-Eastern place in Uganda.

The village community has a population of over 1000 people who are predominantly peasant farmers and the majority do not subscribe to the Catholic faith. Currently St. Mary's Chapel is an outstation Church belonging to St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Parish Koloin, found in Soroti Catholic Diocese..

Some key Historical facts or Reasons for starting the St. Mary's Catholic Church

Over the years, Christianity especially Catholicity has been reducing drastically in our village. Currently our village community has very few active Catholic Christians mainly because of two reasons:

1. The first reason is that our village was first Christianized by the Protestant or Anglican Missionaries and later on by a growing number of Pentecostal and bible believing churches came in. these impacted heavily on the growth of the Catholic faith in the area.
2. The other second reason is the fact that the nearest Catholic Church is quite far from the village prompting many to simply stay at home on Sundays especially the elderly! The next Catholic Church is five miles away from the village which means, one has to walk for 10 miles on Sunday! Only a few interested youths can ride their bicycles. For this reason, most Christians, especially the elderly women and men, found it hard to walk for long on foot to attend Sunday services. Therefore, they just stayed at home on Sundays and only labored to go for Mass on key days like Easter, Christmas or when they get to know that a Bishop will be coming for Confirmations.

A Church under Mango trees!

As a family, and spiritual leaders, we felt that something better needed to be done most especially whenever we visited our home village, some Christians (especially the elderly men and women) would complain of having nowhere to pray from especially since they could no longer find it easy to walk long distances to pray on Sunday.

This is the context from which, after much prayers, research, meetings, and discussions with residents, we decided to consult with the Parish Priest about the possibility of starting a new Parish outstation in our locality. The Parish Priest was more than ready to grant us permission to start provided we build our own Church and donate land for a place of worship. We immediately took up the challenges and organized a day to invite the Parish Priest to inaugurate the Church.

On that joyful Sunday around the month of May 2018 about 26 Christians turned up for prayers under the trees. Slowly, thereafter, the numbers started to grow to about an average of 30, 60 and then 100 fold per week!

By the time COVID19 disorganized us in March 2020, the numbers had reached over 150 people in attendance! Covid19, however, came along with its challenges including strict lockdowns, which restricted meetings of people beyond 5. In spite these challenges,, people continued to pray in their families in small Christian Communities. Within a short time, so many conversions and Baptisms took place!

Bishop's surprise visit

On the 25th August 2020, amidst the challenges caused by COVID19 pandemic, our beloved Bishop, who had learnt about our small Christian Community through the Parish Priest, decided to pay an impromptu visit to our small Christian community on this particular Sunday without any prior arrangement. The few Christians whom he found were of course very surprised to see a whole Bishop come to their village without their prior knowledge let alone preparedness!

The Bishop took time to encourage them to renew their faith in God and to keep their lamps burning because like the Bishop's surprise visit, Jesus will come at a time no one expected time to come.

During the Mass, the Bishop also challenged especially the men to grow in the Lord and to seek to return back to the Sacraments especially Matrimony. He even promised to come back to wed them if he found 5 ready couples who are ready receive the sacrament of Matrimony.

Indeed the men accepted to take the challenge of wedding and mobilized themselves with the assistance of the Catechist. A second miracle happened on the 1st January 2021, when the Bishop came back to our village home, to wed 8 Couples who had been prepared by the Parish Priest prior. On the previous day, 20 baptisms took place and, four of the Couples were officially received in the Catholic faith by the Bishop!

Since then, the number of Christians (both Catholics and non-Catholics) who come to pray on Sunday in our home under our Mango trees increased from 30 to now between 200 and 250 Christians every Sunday and still growing.

So far we have had over 90 Christians baptized and over 15 adults Confirmed in the faith within a span of barely two years! Had it not being for the COVID19, disruption, the Church would have grown further. We thank our beloved Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Eciru and the Parish Priest, Msgr. John Eriau for being pastorally alert and always supporting us in our efforts to grow in faith.

Building our St. Mary's Catholic Chapel and its progress

Immediately after official permission to start the Church, we met and discussed ways to fundraise every Sunday in order to build our Church. We also felt led to name our Church, St. Mary's Catholic Chapel whose feast day is always on the 1st January each year. While our Christians are economically challenged, we have tried our best to contribute both financial and material resources from the Christians which has enabled us to build the Church structure up to near the roofing level.

Currently, we have reached a critical stage of building where we need support from our outside and internal friends, partners and donors in order to complete building the Church.

The committee responsible

The building of the Church is a collective responsibility of all Christians belonging to St. Mary's Catholic Chapel Obosai in Koloin Catholic Parish with the approval and guidance of our Local Bishop Rt. Rev. Joseph Eciru Olicac of Soroti Catholic Diocese and the Parish Priest of St. Thomas the Apostle Koloin from where we belong. We are very grateful to the Bishop, the Parish Priest, the Secretary to the Bishop and all those who have so far contributed their material and financial support which has help us reach this far. It is our humble prayer that God will help us with the remaining funds to finish the Church so that the Christians will be able to immigrate from the trees to a better place of worship where the rains and great dust will not disturb.

These are the committee members involved in the construction of the Church.

1. His Lordship, Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Eciru Oliach – The Legal Holder/Advisor.
2. Monsgr. John Eriau – The Parish Priest and Over all supervisor
3. Mr. Epeduno Kokas – Chairperson St. Mary's Chapel
4. Mr. Edolu Bosco – Chairperson Building committee
5. Mr. Agolor Samuel – Local Resources Mobilizer /Counselor
6. Mr Ariong Joseph – Secretary
7. Mrs. Gabudesia Agwang - Treasurer
8. Mr. Joseph Aonu Okiror – Chairperson fundraising committee
9. Mrs. Frances Aonu – Vice- chairperson fundraising committee
10. Mr. Eric Etellu – Architectural Engineer and Supervisor
11. Mr. James Opio – Contractor
12. Miss Florence Asio – Member
13. Miss Amiko Stella Rose– Cook for workers
14. Mr. Vincent Okung – Catechist and Member
15. Mrs. Tereza Agonget – Member
16. Mr. Eperu Charles Michael – Senior advisor/supervisor.
17. Mr. Simon Mwima – Engineer.

THE REMAINING BUDGET FOR COMPLETION OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH OBOSAI, IN SOROTI CATHOLIC DIOCESE.

Description item	Number of items	Unit cost	Total cost
Cement to complete Plaster woks	133 bags	27,000/=	3,618,000/=
Sand for plaster & concrete	18 trips	70,000/=	1,260,000/=
Water	40 trips	10,000/=	400,000/=
Aggregate stones	2 trips	258,000/=	516,000/=
Alter works (table)	Lump sum	-	1,000,000/=
Windows and doors	summary	-	9,800,000/=
Paint under coat	20 Jericans	75,000/=	1,500,000/=
Paint Silk Vinyl	12 buckets	290,000/=	3,480,000/=
Paint Brilliant white	20 Jericans	70,000/=	1,400,000/=
Paint Blue	10 tins	60,000/=	600,000/=
Paint Green	5 tins	60,000/=	300,000/=
Rollers	20	10,000/=	200,000/=
Brushes 3"	20	5,000/=	100,000/=
Plastic Basins	10	10,000/=	100,000/=
Ladders	4	70,000/=	280,000/=
Sand paper	30 rolls	10,000/=	300,000/=
Additional missing iron sheets	20	65,000/=	1,300,000/=
Food for workers	Lump sum	500,000/=	500,000/=
Bricks for veranda and gable filling	4,000 bricks	300/=	1,200,000/=
Plastic Chairs for sitting	300	25,000/=	7,500,000/=
Transporting materials	Lump sum		900,000/=
SUB-TOTAL			36,100,000/=
Labour costs	25% of materials		7,150,000/=
GRAND TOTAL			43,250,000/=

The Christian Community has already constructed the Church to a certain level. The budget above is the final phase of construction. The total cost for the construction and completion of the Church of St. Mary's Catholic Church Obosai, estimated at **UGX. 43,250,000/=** which is equivalent to **EUR 10,813 at the current exchange rate of 1 EUR = UGX. 4,000/=**.

Our Church Community's local contribution is estimated at UGX 3,652,000/= equivalent to EUR 938

The total amount requested now from our dear friends and donors is **UGX 39,752,000/=** which is equivalent to **EUR 9,938**.

HOWEVER, we are humbly asking your Parish and Christians of Obersasbuch in the Black Forrest through Mr. Siegfried Hund to solicit for us up to **EUR 4,500**, HOWEVER, we are also humbly asking the friends from the Diocese of Muenster in Germany, for a possible matching grant of **EUR. 4,500**.

Finally, we as the Obosai St. Mary's Christian community promise to offer you and your loved ones our prayers. We believe that together, we can advance the Kingdom of God as we build this house of God to serve the new evangelization for the salvation of souls. **Amen!**

Any possible donation, no matter how small, will help us to move the Church forward.

Thank you for sparing time to read through this project proposal.

Written and presented by;

Mr. Joseph Aonu Okiror
Chairperson fundraising committee,
St. Mary's Catholic Church Obosai,
Soroti Catholic Diocese, Uganda, East Africa.
Resident at Emmaus Centre Katikamu

NB. SEE BELOW SOME PHOTOS OF OUR CHURCH UNDER MANGO TREES AT HOME AND THE NEW STRUCTURE BEING BUILT.



On Sunday, usually people pray under these trees. On this Mission Sunday, 10 couples are being prepared for their wedding on the day Bishop comes to open the Church while on the right, special session with the village widows attentive to teachings after the usual prayers were conducted.



The Church by July 2021 and now the current state of the Church by November 2021.



With community efforts and support from friends and well-wishers, we have reached this far. Now we are trusting God to provide more funds to help us complete it.

Thanks a lot for your love and friendship.

Application written by Joseph Aonu Okiror
The Coordinator for Fundraising of St. Mary's Catholic Church Obosai
St. Thomas the Apostle Koloin Catholic Church,
Soroti Catholic Diocese.
Uganda, East Africa.

c.c The Bishop,
c.c The Parish Priest.